

February 20, 2001

The Honorable Greg Ganske
United States House of Representatives
1108 Longworth Building
Washington, DC 20510

Suite 700
1101 Vermont Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20005-3570

Tel. 202.737.6662
Fax 202.737.7061
<http://www.eyenet.org>

FEDERAL AFFAIRS

Dear Representative Ganske:

On behalf of the American Academy of Ophthalmology, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your efforts in drafting a patient protections bill that has garnered bipartisan support. This letter is to voice our support for the principles contained in your bill that the Academy feels must be a part of any bill that passes Congress and that is signed into law by President Bush.

The American Academy of Ophthalmology is the world's largest educational and scientific organization of eye physicians and surgeons (Eye M.D.s), representing over 26,000 members, dedicated to the treatment and diagnosis of disorders of the eye.

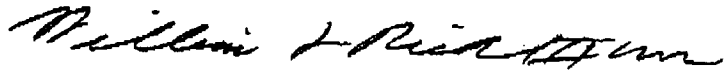
The Academy feels the provisions contained in your bill that must be a part of any final legislation are:

- Ensuring the bill covers all Americans in managed care plans;
- A point-of-service "opt-out" option at the time of enrollment;
- Adequate in-network access to specialists;
- A timely internal and external appeals process where the external appeal is truly independent and the determination on the plan is binding;
- A ban on financial incentives and gag clauses that result in the withholding of care or denial of referrals; and
- A consumer information checklist, including performance measures for health plans

The Academy was also pleased to see President Bush release the list of principles he feels are necessary in any patient protections bill that moves forward. We were equally pleased to see that the areas of concern for the Academy seem to be addressed in both your bill and the President's principles.

Again, thank you for your efforts on behalf of patients and physicians. We look forward to working with both the Congress and the White House to make meaningful patient protections a reality this year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "William L. Rich, III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

William L. Rich, III, MD
Secretary for Federal Affairs